



LOCHCARRON
KIRKTON
DEVELOPMENT BRIEF



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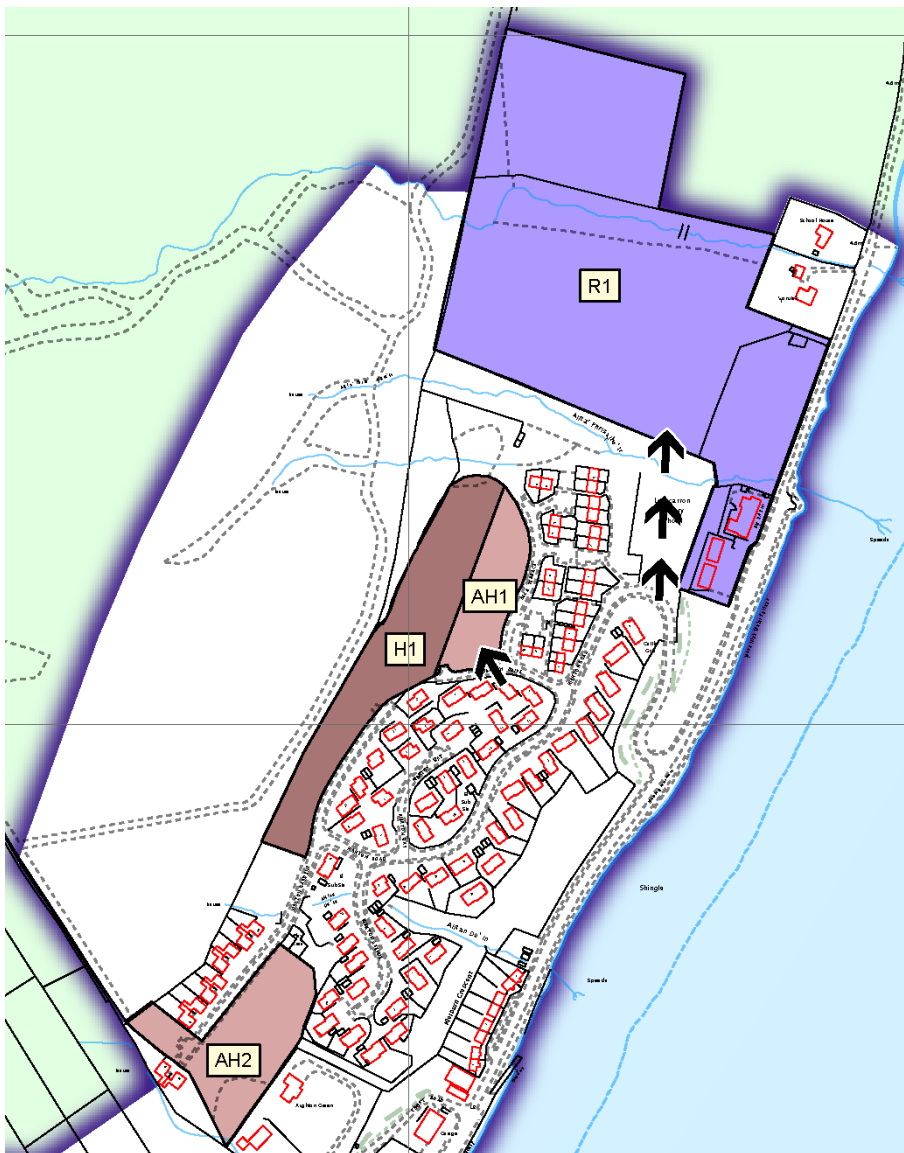
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CONTEXT

The Wester Ross Local Plan and associated Action Plan was adopted by the Highland Council in June 2006, following a Public Local Inquiry in 2004. The Local Plan clearly sets out the need to identify land for future private and affordable housing, and sites are identified throughout the area for this purpose.

The Local Plan identified a number of sites in Lochcarron for the development of affordable housing (sites AH1 and AH2) and for private housing (site H1) within the Kirkton complex. The Local Plan also identified site R1 for the longer term expansion of Lochcarron, tied to the aspirations held locally for a leisure centre in this area and the delivery of an access point to a potential community woodland proposal to the north (see Wester Ross Local Plan Map below).

This development brief has been prepared to help deliver these sites by setting out a framework for a comprehensive and cohesive approach to development, including layout, access, sustainable development principles, servicing and environmental requirements. A degree of design guidance is included to ensure that development moves forward in a sensitive and appropriate manner.



LEFT: WESTER ROSS LOCAL PLAN MAP FOR KIRKTON, LOCHCARRON

TOP RIGHT: DEVELOPER REQUIREMENTS & FACTORS FROM LOCAL PLAN

BOTTOM RIGHT: TABLE FROM LOCAL PLAN

Developer Requirements

Land required for 50 houses in the period to 2012, equivalent to 5 per annum

The Settlement Development Area boundary for Strathcarron has been drawn widely to allow for a limited degree of “overspill” development there from Lochcarron.

Development Factors (Policy 4.8)

The natural boundaries to the village formed by the burn and the golf course to the north and by the woodland to the south should be respected

Views over Lochcarron afforded by open fields between Strome Road and the shoreline should be retained.

Development accessed from Croft Road may require additional passing places along the road to the satisfaction of the Roads Authority

Traffic Calming measures will require to be put in place prior to the granting of any new planning [permission for further housing in the Kirkton area.

Development will require to connect into the existing or new public sewer with any necessary upgrading

A number of natural and cultural heritage features, as listed in Box 1, may occur within the SDA boundary (see Background Maps)

| Ref. | Location | Indicative Capacity | Requirements |
|-------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| <i>H1</i> | <i>Upper Kirkton Gardens</i> | <i>8</i> | <i>Existing consent for 3 houses on part of site. Retain footpath from Sage Terrace to Upper Kirkton Gardens. Retain access to forestry area to the north.</i> |
| <i>AH1</i> | <i>Sage Terrace</i> | <i>8</i> | <i>Affordable housing development on land owned by The Highland Council.</i> |
| <i>AH2</i> | <i>Kirkton Gardens (south end)</i> | <i>13</i> | <i>Part of existing consent (for 23 houses, 10 constructed). Potential access to area to the west should not be restricted. Development should be a maximum of one and a half storeys in height. Footpath access to Croft Road should be retained. Trees above Brookfield and Aughton Green should be retained.</i> |
| <i>R1</i> | <i>North Kirkton</i> | <i>20</i> | <i>A mixed development should be designed for this area to include a Primary School, leisure centre (for which outline consent on part of this site was granted in February 2002), shinty pitch and housing. A Development Brief should be prepared in advance of any application. Advance landscaping/tree planting should take place at the eastern boundary above Moruisk and the School House, and on the northern and southern boundaries. Access off A896 may require improvements to the A896 towards the village centre depending on the precise location. Developments should allow for longer term access provision to the north and west. An alternative access could be from the north, subject to upgrading of a larger length of the A896 towards the village centre. Any development proposals may be subject to a tidal flood risk assessment.</i> |
| <i>BI1</i> | <i>Tullich Industrial Estate</i> | | <i>Land available for development in the northern part of the Estate. A site within the existing roads depot will be required for a small recycling centre.</i> |

PURPOSE

The purpose of the brief therefore is to:

- Encourage and guide the early development of both affordable and private housing in Lochcarron;
- Highlight the key planning issues which will need to be taken into account in applications for planning permission in this area, based partly on community concerns previously raised;
- Clearly set out the opportunities for accessing the future development of the leisure centre and community woodland and;
- Set out a framework for the co-ordinated delivery of development in this area by all the relevant stakeholders.

Realising development in this area will rely upon the Council, Albyn Housing, the private landowner and the community groups in the area continuing to work together to overcome some of the constraints highlighted in this document.

A key focus of this document is to retain and develop the character of Lochcarron within the landscape. To assist in this, the Council and Albyn Housing have jointly commissioned Rural Design of Skye to highlight the key layout and design principles that developers will require to take into account.

Users of this development brief should also refer to the Highland Council's Designing for Sustainability guidance. Appendix 1 indicates the sustainable design principles that should be considered in taking development proposals forward. It should be used for reference in the preparation of the sustainable design statement.

A copy of the Designing for Sustainability guidance itself can be obtained in pdf or on CD by contacting the Planning and Development Service or by accessing it from the internet at:

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourenvironment/planning/developmentplans/developmentplanpolicyguidance/designingforsustainability.htm>

THE SITES

The Local Plan identifies three sites for housing within the Kirkton complex (see Wester Ross Local Plan map on page 1 and the aerial photo below) and an expansion mixed use site north of Kirkton (R1).

The ground to the rear of Kirkton has been cleared and is now covered with rough grass, self-seeded trees and broom. Site H1 Upper Kirkton Gardens is privately owned and has an indicative capacity for 15 units. The two affordable housing sites (AH1 and AH2) are owned by the Highland Council. Site AH1 at Sage Terrace has an indicative capacity for 8 affordable units, and site AH2 Kirkton Gardens has an indicative capacity for 10 units. This site is part of an existing consent for 23 houses, of which 10 have already been constructed. The guidance in the Local Plan requires that the mature trees above Brookfield and Aughton Green should be retained.

A site was also identified to cater for a mixed use development, to include a leisure centre (for which outline consent on part of the site was granted in February 2002), and housing. Site R1 which is to the north of the Kirkton complex is under the common grazings at present. There is an indicative capacity for 20 houses on this site. The Local Plan states that advance landscaping or tree planting should take place at the eastern boundary above Moruisk and the School house, and on the northern and southern boundaries. Beyond, is the Kirkton woodland, which is the subject of community buy-out interest from current owners, the Forestry Commission.



ANALYSIS

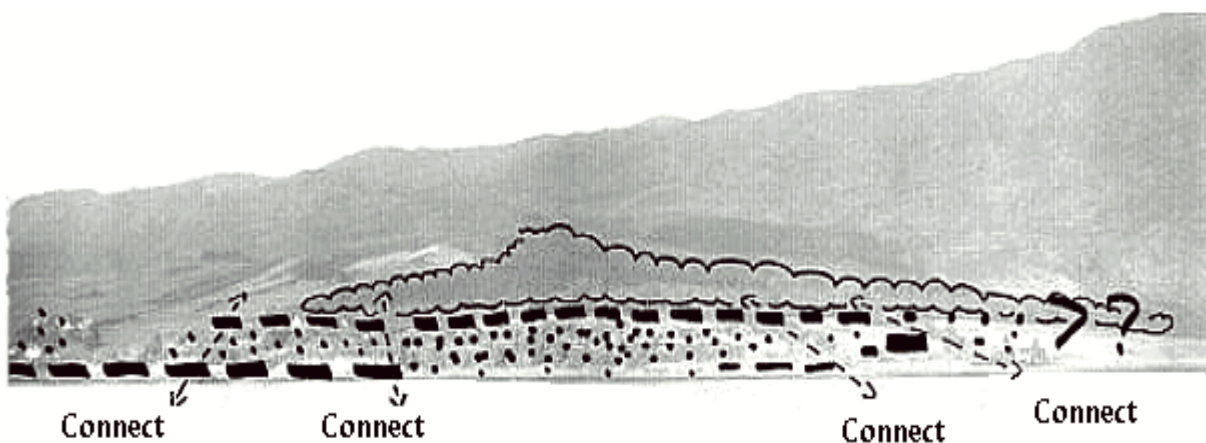
Lochcarron was traditionally a linear settlement although more recent development has started to creep up the slopes behind. This has created a hard edge of dense development along the shore line with more random, looser development on the hillside behind. In Kirkton the 'finlogs' are part of this looser development and generate a low visual impact (for a more detailed analysis please refer to the Designing within the Highland Context section of the table in Appendix 1).

You can also refer to the site observations and constraint map (overleaf) which highlights the main considerations and analysis which have informed the design and layout guidance. Research on the settlement patterns and built form of the Highlands was also carried out (see Appendix 2). The initial approach was to consider the development as a whole, particularly with regard to the wider impact of the development. This emphasised the developments potential at this scale and focused upon a number of sketch studies addressing the overall view from across the loch.

The designing for sustainability table in Appendix 1 outlines how the development brief has considered and dealt with the key sustainability aspects and sets out the specific technical advice associated with: community and economy, designing within the Highland context, energy and building systems, water, sewerage and waste, materials, biodiversity and transport. Prospective applicants should refer to Appendix 1 when developing proposals as it also gives additional guidance and technical advice.

DESIGN CONCEPT

The layouts proposed for the Kirkton area tie the existing and proposed developments at Kirkton to the rest of Lochcarron. The primary vision relates to the continuation of a strong linear development along the edge of the woodland following what is already in place at Kirkton Gardens. This edge provides a backbone for the remaining development sites which mirrors the pattern of development in the rest of Lochcarron and connects them. The proposed layout also responds to the topography, the alignment of roads, tracks and landscape.

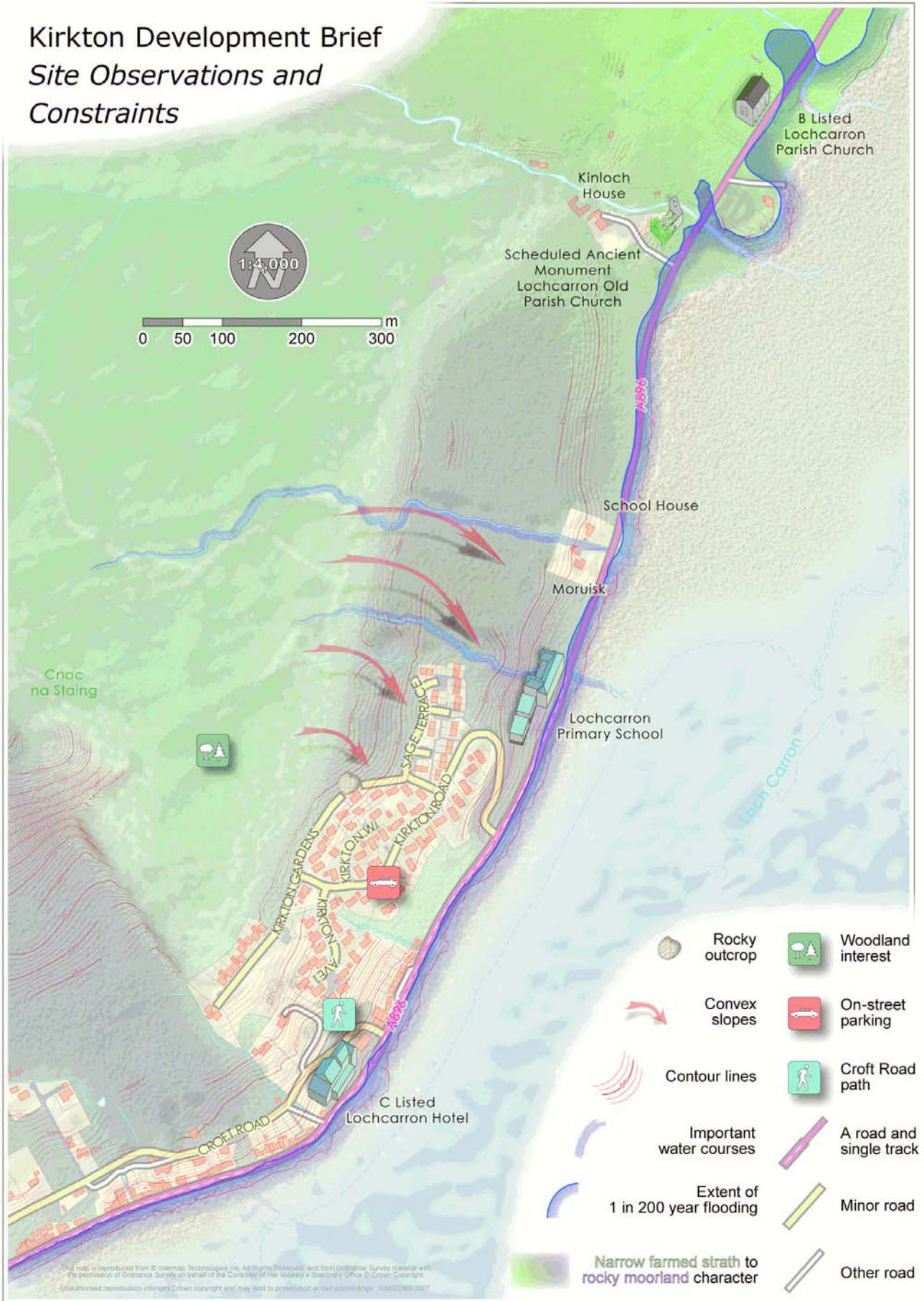


ABOVE: DESIGN CONCEPT SKETCH

RIGHT: SITE OBSERVATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS MAP

Kirkton Development Brief

Site Observations and Constraints



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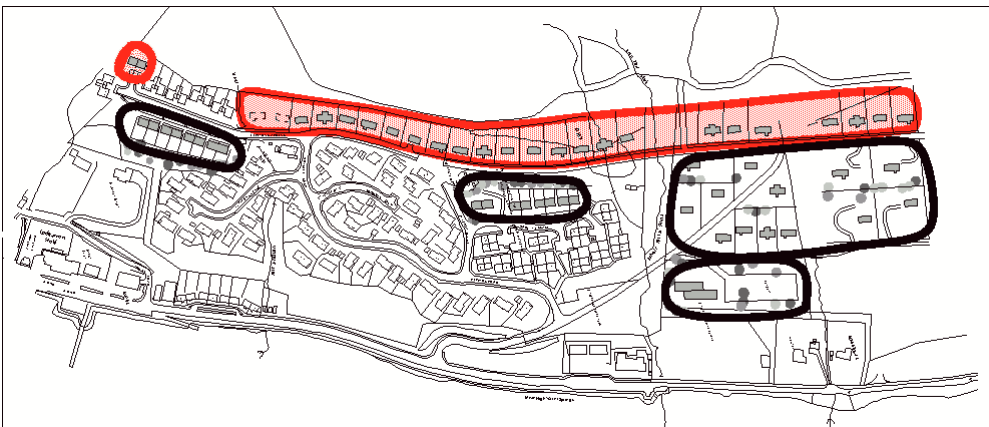
OVERVIEW OF THE ZONES

The Local Plan has identified four distinct sites for development, H1, AH1, AH2 and R1. The development of these sites is shown in this development brief in the following site “zones” but ultimately will lead to the coordinated “vision” of the future development of this area as shown on pages 16 and 17.

- a Linear zone which lies along the forest edge comprising part of sites AH2 and R1, and all of site H1
- Low profile zone comprising of AH1 and part of site AH2
- Scattered zone which is the middle section of site R1
- A Leisure Centre zone in the lower section of site R1

The proposed layout combines different types of development appropriate to different locations. Landscaping programmes and planting schemes are required with planning applications as they come forward. The proposed layout purposefully sets aside land directly adjacent to the watercourses in order to encourage woodland expansion in these areas. For materials the use of slate is encouraged however where lower cost or lower pitch alternatives are necessary the use of profiled metal sheeting or similar alternatives with more contextual/historical connection will be required.

LINEAR ZONE (PART OF SITES AH2 AND R1 AND ALL OF H1)



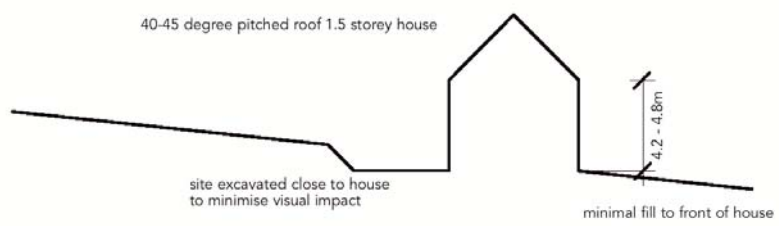
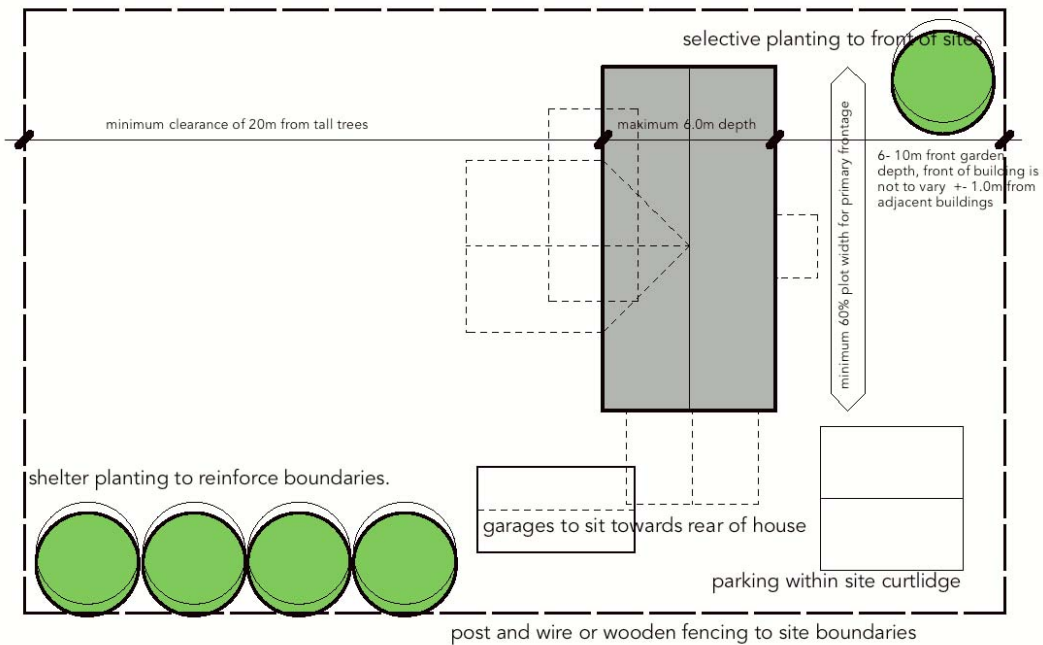
The Linear Zone lies along the forest edge comprising part of sites AH2 and R1, and all of site H1. The development of this area should be toward the top of the sites, following the alignment of the forest edge. Some restructuring and regrading of the forest edge will help when building in the appropriate safeguard distances. This layout form references the historical development pattern of Lochcarron, and will ensure that the pattern of development retains a sense of character and purpose when viewed from a distance, and a consistency when viewed from the street. To achieve this development should reference traditional highland forms, proportions and massing (see Appendix 2).



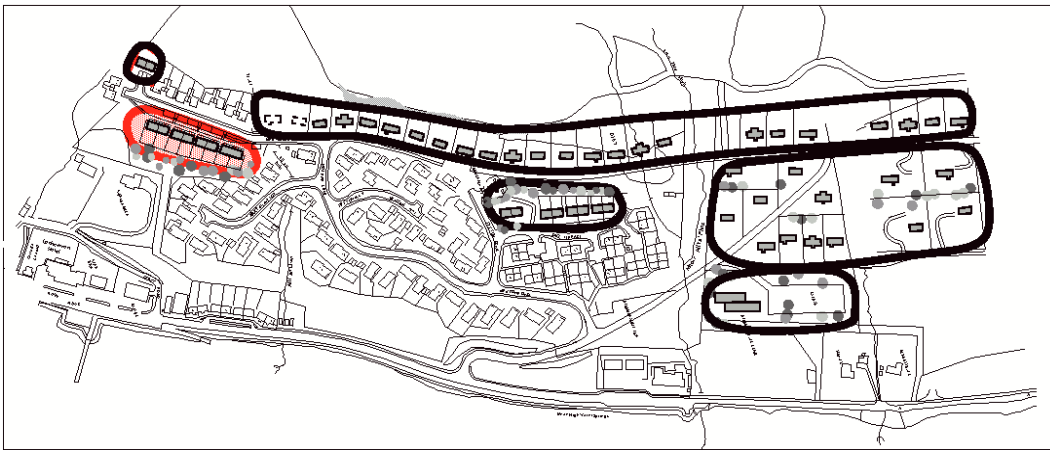
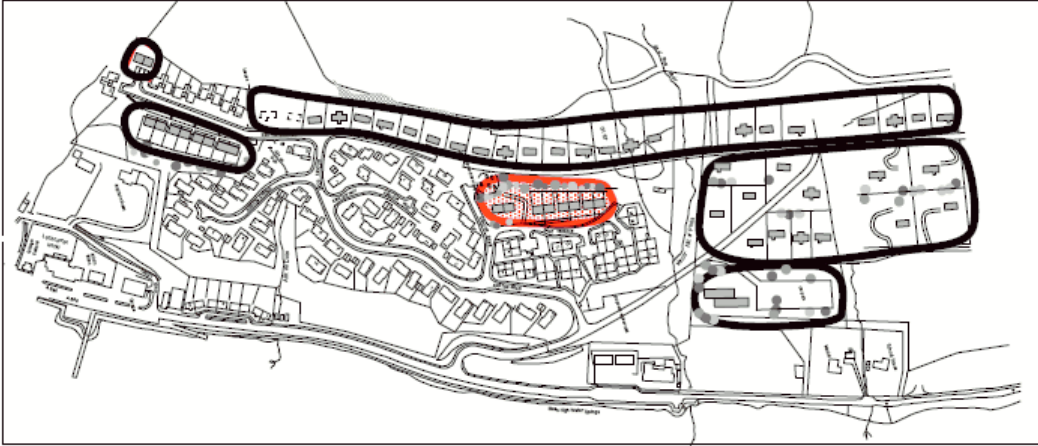
Development of this area will not of course be at the expense of innovation. The aim is primarily to achieve a consistency of building proportions. A maximum building depth and consistent roof pitches will ensure that the buildings retain a consistency of form and the guidance shown in the layout below will ensure this is delivered. A predominance of the use of white or off white wall materials will be encouraged to emphasise the linearity of development, together with a minimum facade length in proportion to the overall plot width.

ABOVE: SKETCHES OF FROM LEFT TO RIGHT SITES AH2, H1 & R1
 BELOW: LINEAR PLOT LAYOUT
 BOTTOM: LINEAR PLOT SECTION

the primary form of house echoes traditional narrow front to back dimension, larger buildings are achieved by simple extended forms



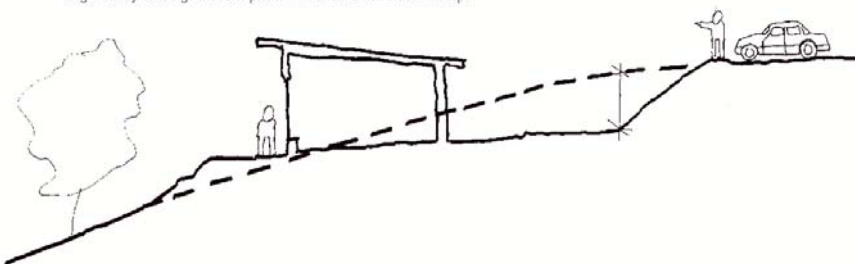
LOW PROFILE ZONE (PART OF SITE AH2 AND ALL OF AH1)



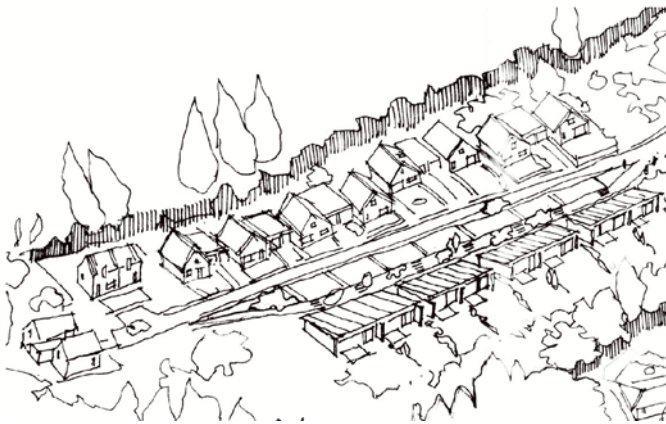
The Low Profile Zone has perhaps the most contentious development sites which are in close proximity to existing dwellings with established patterns of use and views. These concerns were raised by the community at the time of the Local Plan preparation and the guidance set out here will enable the concerns to be addressed.

It is proposed that the development of sites AH1 and AH2 should follow a low profile approach to preserve views from established properties within Kirkton where possible, and take advantage of the possibilities of the steeply sloping sites.

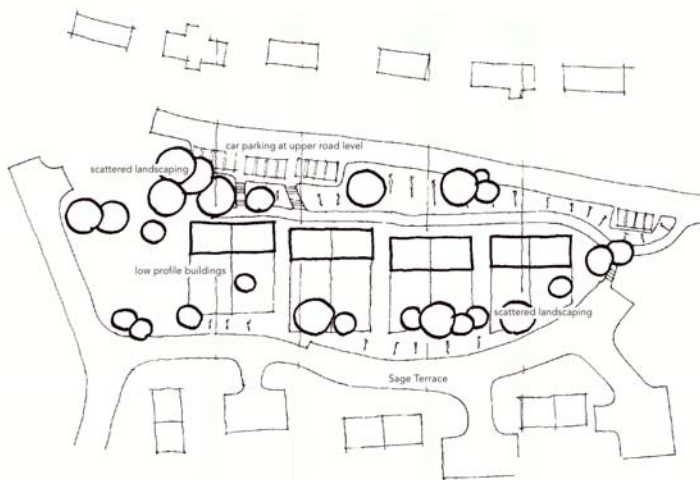
single storey buildings with low pitched roofs set down into landscape



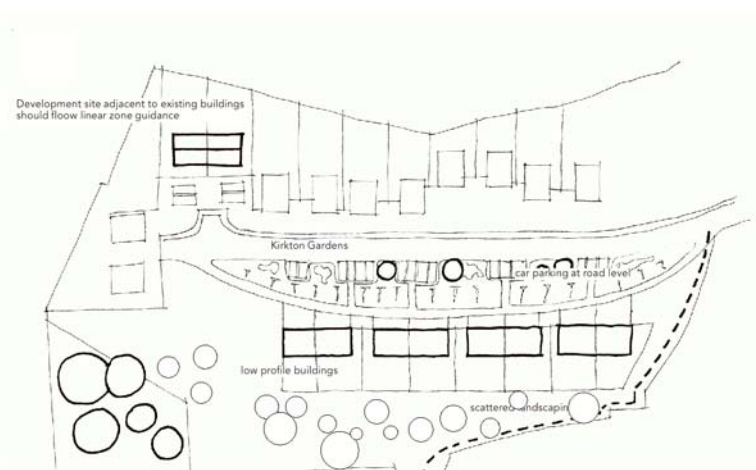
LEFT: LOW PROFILE SECTION



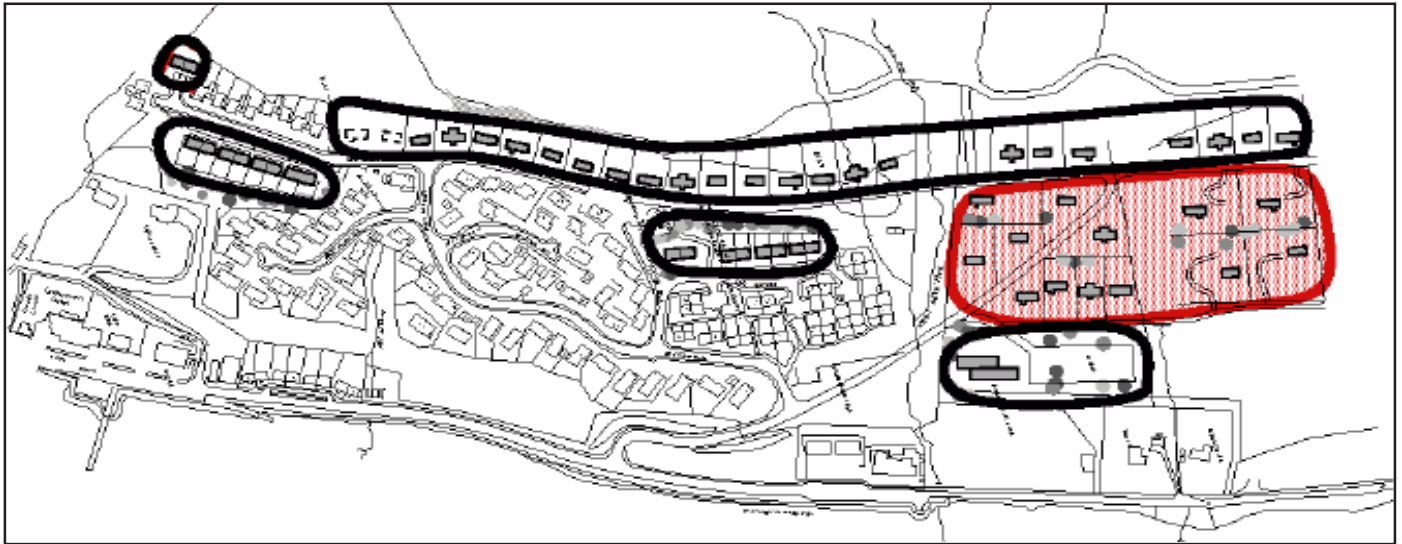
Building colour in these instances should be restrained and muted, perhaps with a predominance of timber cladding and glass, as opposed to white render. There is a need to maintain the trees on site AH2 but the developer should consider replacement of some of the existing spruce and planting native species which require a smaller safeguard distance. Planting is also required to the front of AH2 and to the rear of AH1 to ensure integration with existing development. The development of these areas is being actively progressed by Albyn Housing Society for the delivery of much needed affordable housing in Lochcarron.



ABOVE: SKETCHES OF FROM LEFT TO RIGHT SITES AH2 & AH1
LEFT: POTENTIAL LAYOUT FOR SITE AH1
BOTTOM: POTENTIAL LAYOUT FOR SITE AH2



SCATTERED ZONE (MIDDLE SECTION OF SITE R1)

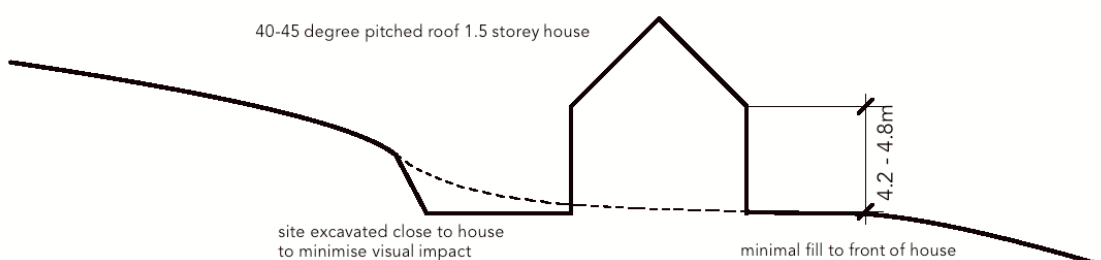


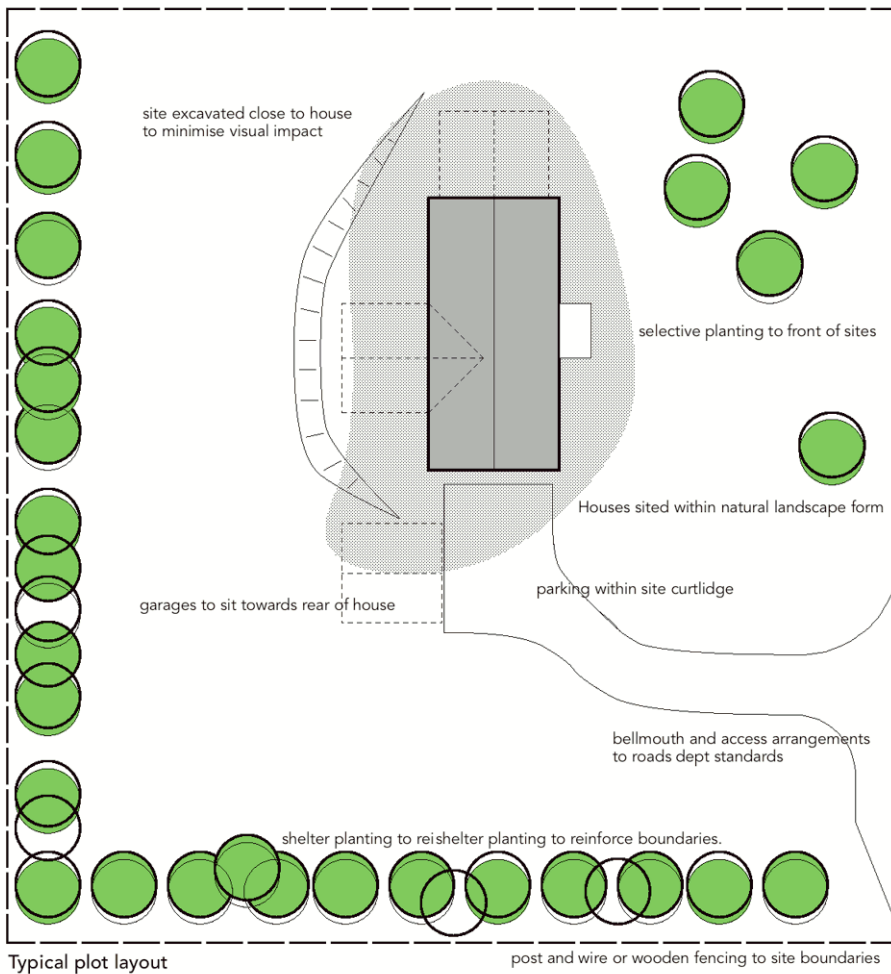
The Scattered Zone is the middle section of site R1. The development of the edge of the site requires careful consideration, and it is proposed that this should have a lower density than the linear development above. This is intended to mirror the traditional scatter of development found towards the south end of Lochcarron, and allows development to dissipate naturally towards the edge.

These framework proposals are intended to guide development. There are indicative capacities within The Sites section of the brief which guide the overall number of houses within designated areas. This will allow the development pattern to evolve naturally within this restriction.



LEFT: SKETCH OF SITE R1
BELOW: SECTION FROM SCATTERED ZONE

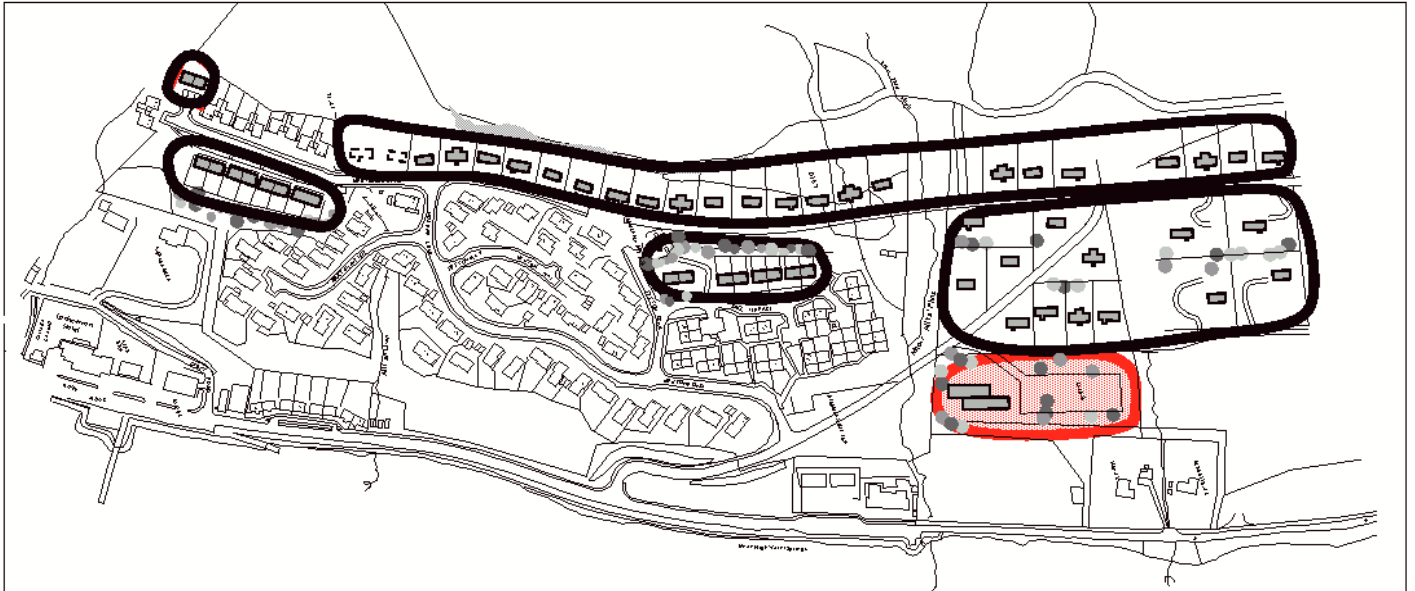




LEFT: SCATTERED ZONE
PLOT LAYOUT
BELOW: 3D EXAMPLES
OF BUILT FORM

It is proposed that building form will follow the guidance for the linear development, and have its routes in traditional forms. However in recognition that the houses on these sites may be of a larger scale we would suggest that these rules introduce another layer of design guidance, for example in cases where a house exceeds a certain size (180m²) its building shape must be broken down into at least two distinct elements, akin to the “extended croft house” and perhaps utilise different materials. Please refer to Appendix 2 for illustration of the guidance relating to building shape and form and for examples of historic precedence which have informed the design and layout guidance.

LEISURE CENTRE ZONE (LOWER SECTION OF SITE R1)



The proposed leisure centre is located within the lower part of site R1. Whilst certain guidelines can be established for the Leisure Centre, the primary issue relates to the aspiration towards good design. Although large buildings in the highland context generally take a simple form in this instance the steeply sloping site makes this very difficult to achieve. A more broken down form should be considered by breaking the buildings form into several components, perhaps using different floor levels and heights.



LEFT: LEISURE CENTRE SKETCH

While building cost is always an issue for community facilities, the use of a natural high quality palette of materials is encouraged. Every effort should be made to minimise the overall number of parking spaces required, and the wider visual impact of car parking, perhaps by an innovative use of landscaping and the use of a stepped layout along the contours. The issue of access to the site is dealt with within the following section of the development brief.

There are two main access issues which need to be addressed in taking forward development at Kirkton. The first is in relation to development being served from the existing complex and the second to the opening up of site R1.

EXISTING KIRKTON COMPLEX

Existing residents have concerns over the capacity of the Kirkton road. In 2004 Nortec were commissioned by the Highland Council to examine the adequacy of the geometric arrangement of present scheme roads in light of the development proposed in the Local Plan and traffic that would load onto these roads.

This assessment came to the conclusion that 'the existing roads within the Kirkton scheme have sufficient residual capacity to be able to accommodate the additional traffic that would be generated from the new 29 house development proposed, with only some minor parking restrictions.'

The framework developed by Rural Design now indicates a maximum of 26 houses being serviced off the existing road network. However after 15 houses have been built within the Kirkton complex (on sites AH1, AH2, and H1) the Council has committed to commission an independent assessment of the road network. This will ensure that the situation is reassessed to examine the effect of additional housing, and the results can then be used to inform further development proposals.



ACCESS TO SITE R1

Access to site R1 is critical to the long term development of Lochcarron. There are two proposed layout road options shown which allow for different access solutions to this site one from the existing Kirkton road (shown below) and one from the north (shown overleaf). Both are acceptable solutions in planning and engineering terms. The impact on the design and layout is minimal with the only difference being the leisure centre and its car park transposing to accommodate the different access routes.

Cost remains a significant issue, and the development of the road to access site R1 will be the subject of further discussion between prospective developers, the Council and the local community. Further work has been commissioned by the Council on the feasibility and costs of both access arrangements and this will inform these discussions. A commitment for the delivery of an integrated solution for all of the development sites in Lochcarron will hopefully ultimately lead to the opening up of this site.

ROAD REQUIREMENTS

It is important that development in the area leaves open options for long term expansion and for extraction of timber from the woodland to the rear of Kirkton. Access to this woodland should be retained in the following ways:

- from site H1 there is a requirement to retain access to the forestry to the north;
- from site AH2 potential access of the area to the west should not be restricted by its development; and on
- site R1 development should allow for longer term access to the north and west.



LEFT: PROPOSED
LAYOUT ROAD
OPTION 1

PEDESTRIANS

It is important that pedestrian access from Kirkton onto Croft Road, the path from Sage Terrace to Upper Kirkton Gardens, and access to the forestry area to the north are retained. There will also be opportunity for footpaths within the areas set aside for woodland expansion and a pedestrian link should be established between the new leisure centre and the primary school. In addition the internal links within the complex will need to be strengthened by appropriate footpath provision connecting the newly developed areas at Upper Kirkton Gardens.

The Highland Council require footpath provision on either side of a distributor road however consideration should be given to upgrading one of the footpaths to a wider cycle path by traffic order. For roads serving multiple houses within the development then the shared surface principles which incorporates home zones should be adopted. With a shared surface pedestrians should have priority with traffic calming techniques adopted into the design.



LEFT:
PROPOSED
LAYOUT ROAD
OPTION 2

FLOODING ISSUES

The access points to site R1 lies within the indicative limits of coastal flooding shown upon the Indicative River & Coastal Flood Map (Scotland) for floods with a 1 in 200 year return period. Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 7: "Planning and Flooding" requires amongst other things that the effects of a flood on proposed access, including by emergency services should be taken into account. There are two watercourses which dissect site R1. SEPA has highlighted that there may be a risk of flooding from these two watercourses but also from surface water runoff. Developers will be required to carry out a Flood Risk Assessment in line with SPP7 in order to demonstrate that new development will be protected against all flood events up to a 1 in 200 year standard, and that proposals enable emergency access to the site during 1 in 200 year events.

Consideration must be given to the possibility of flooding from all sources. SEPA holds no historic or anecdotal information pertaining to flood risk for this area but surface water runoff is likely to be an issue. As such developers will be required to carry out drainage assessments in order to illustrate how any drainage measures will have a neutral or better effect on the risk of flooding both on and off the site (in terms of paragraph 15 of SPP7). The surface water scheme should follow the treatment train within the new CIRIA manual C697. These can be accessed off the internet at <http://www.ciria.org/downloads.htm>. Further information on SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage systems) and the technical guidance development needs to comply with can be found in Appendix 1 within the section on water.

SERVICING CONSIDERATIONS

As the development on the various sites are progressed there will need to be an assessment of the ground conditions which will further inform the layout of proposals and determine the type of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) treatment required.

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) advises that appropriately scaled and located facilities for waste segregation and recycling be incorporated into the design from the outset to assist delivery of the Area Waste Plan. There are two elements to this, space within individual dwellings and commercial premises for the storage of recycling bins and allocation of space for community facilities. Further details of the requirements in relation to sustainable urban drainage systems and waste can be found in appendix 1.

There is sufficient spare capacity in the water and sewage treatment facilities for the levels of development proposed. Scottish Water have acknowledged that there have been deficiency issues in Lochcarron sewerage system and work is underway to address saline intrusion. For areas H1, AH1 and AH2 sufficient network capacity will be available. For area R1 the local sewer network may need capacity to be checked, in particular in relation to the sewage pump station adjacent to the school. Proposed developments are required to connect to the public sewer.

Developers should however ensure that prior discussions are carried out with Scottish Water (see contacts list).

CULTURAL HERITAGE

The old Lochcarron parish church which lies south west of the current parish church is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The design and layout guidance ensures that the setting of this and the key 'edge' buildings which mark the entrance to the village will be protected. The planting stipulated within site R1 and on its southern and northern boundary will also soften the visual impact.

There are no recorded archaeological sites present and the historic maps do not indicate that there is likely to be any merit in undertaking archaeological evaluation in sites AH1, AH2 and H1. With regard to site R1, the current school building should be preserved in-situ or by record in any future redevelopment proposals. There appear to be some additional remains of historic buildings to the north of R1 although this needs to be verified on the ground, again as part of archaeological evaluation at the time of planning applications.

NATURAL HERITAGE

The coniferous woodland at Kirkton and two small watercourses with associated riparian woodland in expansion site R1 are of ecological importance. The development of site R1 will offer an opportunity to improve biodiversity within the site and surrounding area. A green wedge has been identified between site R1 and Kirkton road to protect landscape amenity and biodiversity (see the proposed layout road options on pages 18 &19). If the access runs through here then good reinstatement and associated planting is required.

There is a requirement for landscaping programmes and planting schemes to be submitted with applications as they come forward and these should consider the opportunities for enhancing wildlife habitats. The regrading of the coniferous woodland edge on site H1 and along the top of site R1 will likely be required in order to achieve the setback distances required for housing. However the opening up of site R1 also offers the opportunity for further extraction and restructuring which could increase the wildlife habitats and biodiversity of the woodland.

Applicants are encouraged to incorporate existing watercourses as positive environmental features in development schemes and to identify suitable opportunities for creating new water or wetland features. At necessary watercourse crossings bridging solutions or bottomless culverts should be utilised with due regard to the natural habitat and environmental concerns. In line with SEPA advice, any bridging solutions or bottomless culverts must maintain or improve existing flow conditions and aquatic life.

Any necessary watercourse engineering activities including temporary river crossings and possibly upgrading of crossings will require authorisation by SEPA under The Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations (CAR). Any proposals which do not demonstrate best practice are unlikely to receive authorisation.

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SITE DESCRIPTION AND LAYOUT

This information follows the format of the Designing for Sustainability Development Plan Policy Guideline and gives further guidance for developers. It also provides a template for the submission of a sustainable design statement as required by policy 4 of the Wester Ross Local Plan.

Describe the site location and the surrounding land uses.

Refer to The Sites section of the brief (page 5) .

State the distance from the site to the nearest public services and facilities, such as schools, play space and recreational space.

The sites are well located for the primary school which is situated within site R1 and within easy walking distance of all the allocations. In terms of open space the Highland Council will expect any proposals to meet the provisions as set out in National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)11/Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)11. In order to achieve the best layout and improve the play area’s positioning it may be necessary to relocate it from site AH2 to site AH1.

Describe how the project will make use of existing buildings, structures, infrastructure or brownfield sites.

All the allocations involved are on green field land.

Describe the topography (site contours), microclimate (wind, sun orientation, exposure, shelter) and views to / from / over the site and the extent and nature of existing trees and plants

Refer to the Design and Layout Guidance section (pages 6-14) of the brief particularly its site observations and constraints map (page 7).

Explain how the position and alignment of the dwelling will make use of solar gain and natural shelter.

The sites have a southerly aspect so the layout and design principles for the sites have been determined with consideration to this; applicants should reflect on how they can make best use of passive solar gain.

There is a requirement for applicants to follow the design framework and advance landscaping/tree planting needs to take place at the eastern boundary above Moruisk and the school house, and on the northern and southern boundaries of R1. Applicants should provide details of landscaping and planting schemes along with any planning application.

Show how new services will be designed to use the land efficiently.

The layouts of the sites have been designed to ensure that future access to the forestry can be achieved and for efficient use of land. The layouts proposed have been informed by the site observations and constraints. As the sites are progressed there will be an assessment of the ground conditions which will inform the layout and determine the type of SUDS treatment required.

Describe the proximity of public utilities e.g. underground services, drainage systems, overhead power lines and water supply and state how these will be used.

Refer to the Servicing Considerations section of the brief (page 20).

Describe the proposed site layout; explain how public / private space between buildings will be used by day/by night.

The framework proposals have broadly given consideration to the use of the spaces and the interaction between private and public space. Planning Advice Note (PAN) 77 - Designing Safer Places provides further guidance.

Describe any site-specific hazards such as flooding, exposure, subsidence etc. and show how the design will address them.

Refer to the Flooding Issues and Services sections of the brief (page 20).

Describe any site-specific constraints such as Scheduled Monuments, Archaeological sites, Listed Buildings and Designed Landscapes, and how the design will address the need to protect and enhance these.

Refer to the Cultural Heritage section of the brief (page 21).

Describe how the local community has been consulted about the project, and what involvement they will have in its planning.

The process of producing the development brief was assessed and informed by the National Standards of Community Engagement. This guided us in delivering good quality engagement with the community and the other key stakeholders.

The initial work was done collaboratively through a key stakeholders meeting and by meeting up locally with the community leisure and woodland groups. Thereafter there was a full public consultation with a full day workshop. A public meeting was held the following night to present the proposals and to respond to concerns expressed during the workshop event. These events were held locally, letters were sent to the immediate residents at Kirkton and the events were well advertised in the local press and by posters beforehand.

The workshop element was delivered in order to allow a more informal setting for people to ask questions and give their opinions. It also helped us to move away from a solely written approach which inevitably excludes some people. At the end of the meeting the fundamental concerns had been addressed and the key elements of the brief were agreed on.

The development brief has been informed by the key stakeholders including the public who submitted written representations and gave their feedback at the workshop and meeting. This allowed us to get confirmation on the key elements of this brief. However when planning applications come forward there will be an opportunity for people to make representations on the detailed proposals.

The brief will act as a framework for all the interested parties: and its realisation relies on the developers, Albyn Housing Society, the private landowner and the community groups driving it forward. It is vital that the necessary dialogue between these parties is continued.

Identify what facilities will be provided that will benefit the community.

The brief provides a framework which could help realise access to woodland and the development of a community leisure centre. There is also the prospect of affordable housing on the council owned land which is a much needed resource. Private proposals coming forward will need to follow the Council's affordable housing policy which is set out within Policy 4 of the Wester Ross Local Plan and within the Council's supplementary planning guidance on affordable housing.

Demonstrate how the development will support social inclusion by catering to the needs of those of different age, physical ability and income.

The development brief covers both affordable and private housing need which caters for people with different incomes. The housing association will determine the allocations policy making sure they comply with equal opportunities law. They will also look at how they can give greater weighting to community needs as part of their mainstream allocations process. When developing a leisure centre it will be important to consider designing in flexibility for the facility so it can meet a wide range of needs.

Describe how the development has been designed to provide a secure, healthy environment.

The layout allows a clear distinction between the public and private spaces whilst ensuring their connection. It should be noted that the public spaces have been purposefully set aside; for instance the green wedge between R1 and Kirkton has been protected for its landscape amenity and biodiversity.

Applicants should seek to include measures to prevent crime and the fear of crime. In this regard the pedestrian footpaths including the connection between R1 and Kirkton road should be appropriately maintained.

Explain how the development will benefit the local economy.

There has been a very low building rate in Lochcarron with less than 25 houses built over the course of the last 9 years. There is a real need for the growth which has been allocated for in the Wester Ross Local Plan to come forward so that it can meet demand and help sustain Lochcarron. Businesses have found it difficult under these circumstances to attract and hold onto employees because of the lack of accommodation for employees. Without the appropriate housing available young people are more likely to leave. The mix of affordable and private housing that could be provided should meet the needs of this community over the next ten years and beyond.

Describe the character of surrounding buildings in terms of their groupings, scale (height and massing) and appearance (materials, windows, entrances etc.); state whether the site is in or near a conservation area.

There is no conservation status which applies within Lochcarron. The Kirkton complex is built on the convex slopes directly below the forest edge. The existing complex which was built in the 1970's has some 55 single storey wooden chalets. The 'finlogs' were densely developed, occupying small plots, set out in an unusual pattern following the twisting roads. The tree cover, low profile and materials used ensure low visual impact.

On a more traditional layout, at an intermediate level at the north end, there are 22 semi detached stone built houses at Sage Terrace. More prominently at the southern end there are a further ten semi detached stone built houses at Kirkton Gardens just below the forest edge.

Lochcarron was traditionally a more linear settlement with more recent development starting to creep up the slopes behind. This has created a hard edge of dense development along the shore line with more random, looser development on the hillside behind.

The church, manse and burial ground which lie separated from the existing village and still some 300 metres beyond the expansion site R1 are key “edge” buildings which mark the entrance to the settlement.

The finlogs generate a low visual impact; with the white of the houses at Kirkton Gardens drawing your attention instead. The design framework ties the existing and proposed developments at Kirkton to the rest of Lochcarron.

Describe local landmarks, focal points and views to/from/over the site and demonstrate how the design responds to these.

Refer to the Design and Layout Guidance section of the brief (pages 6-14).

Describe the existing landscape character; state whether the site is in or near a nature conservation area.

Lochcarron is situated on the northern side of a fjord type inner loch and has a fairly gentle gradient convex slope from the shoreline which generates a sense of enclosure. The landscape character moves from a narrow farmed strath type where the key ‘edge’ building lie to a rocky moorland type and site R1 is currently under rough grazings. Kirkton does not lie within or adjacent to any nature conservation area.

Demonstrate how the project’s design will fit with and enhance the surrounding landscape or townscape, while respecting natural and cultural heritage.

Refer to the Design Layout and Guidance section within the brief (pages 6-14).

Describe how archaeological and historic sites and landscapes will be protected around the development.

Refer to the Cultural Heritage section of the brief (page 21).

Identify any relevant agencies (e.g. SEPA, SNH, Historic Scotland) that have been consulted and the outcome of that consultation

The key stakeholders included representatives from SNH and SEPA and a wide range of representation and expertise from within the Council alongside the private land owner and the housing association who were all brought together at the inception meeting. The outcome of that, the follow on meetings and the public consultation is the content of this brief which has gone back to the key stakeholders for comment before publication.

Many of these stakeholders will again be consulted on the detailed proposals once planning applications are submitted. Applicants are encouraged to refer to the contacts list (page 22) if they need to make any enquiries to discuss their proposals prior to submission.

Show how the design will withstand Highland weather conditions.

The measures required of applicants with regards to flood risk have already been outlined in the Flood Issues & Servicing Considerations section of the brief. These ensure that emergency access will be achieved during a 1 in 200 year flood risk and that surface water run off within new development will be dealt with appropriately. The ground conditions need to be investigated to determine what type of SUDS devices can be utilised to meet the levels of treatment required.

Show how the design of the development will minimise energy consumption and where opportunities for small scale renewable energy opportunities exist.

These proposals offer an opportunity to consider the potential for incorporating energy efficiency measures into the design of new development e.g. micro renewables or building design etc, all of which would help promote sustainable development. Energy efficiency should also be incorporated into planning applications as part of the sustainable design statements.

Identify what the development's main energy source(s) will be.

The design framework encourages buildings to be aligned to make best possible use of solar gain. The sites are all south facing and so applicants are encouraged to make good use of solar gain. The forestry at Kirkton may provide an opportunity for a biomass project. Other technologies which are suitable for use in the Highlands have been identified in the Designing for Sustainability guidance, and should be considered.

Describe how systems will be designed to ensure a healthy indoor environment.

It is possible to design buildings for low or no heating demand and there are sustainable alternatives to mechanical ventilation. Developers should consider the Designing for Sustainability guidance and develop energy efficient heating, lighting and ventilation systems.

Show how water use will be minimised.

Opportunities for water efficiency, grey water recycling, and rainwater harvesting should be considered as part of subsequent planning applications. Further guidance on water efficiency, grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting can be found in CIRIA Manual C539 "Rainwater and greywater use in buildings. Best practice guidance", CIRIA Manual C626 "Model agreements for sustainable water management systems. Model agreement for rainwater and greywater use systems" and CIRIA Manual PR080 "Rainwater and greywater use in buildings. Decision-making for water conservation".

Explain how the development will comply with relevant technical guidance on drainage design.

It is a requirement of the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations (CAR) that sites are drained by SUDS. The surface water scheme should follow the treatment train within the new CIRIA manual C697 and close-to-source infiltration SUDS provided where ground conditions are suitable. The assessment should include the level of information compatible with planning advice in PAN 61 Paragraphs 23 and 24 and technical guidance within CIRIA C697.

Identify the type of drainage system proposed and how this will be designed to reduce flood risk, consider potential impact of runoff and avoid pollution.

If there is poor infiltration then non-infiltration SUDS may be required and will have a greater land take. The level of SUDS treatment required is dependant upon the nature of the development:

- i) For residential developments one level of treatment is acceptable;
- ii) For non-residential developments (including light commercial) two levels of treatment is recognised best practice. SEPA would accept a single level of treatment for roof water runoff; and
- iii) For industrial and major commercial sites the level of treatment is dependant upon the sensitivity of the receiving watercourse but usually three levels is recognised best practice.

Areas which are to be subjected to specifically polluting activities, such as skip areas, yard areas, delivery bays, pressure washing areas, fuelling areas, should be connected to the foul sewer. SEPA would accept a single level of treatment for roof water runoff.

Explain how sewage will be managed and treated and how the development will comply with relevant technical guidance on sewage disposal.

Refer to the Servicing Considerations section within the brief (page 20).

Identify where waste, composting and recycling bins will be located to allow for ease of use and Council waste collection.

In addition SEPA advises that appropriately scaled and located facilities for waste segregation and recycling be incorporated into the design from the outset to assist delivery of the Area Waste Plan. There are two elements to this; space within individual dwellings and commercial premises for the storage of recycling bins and allocation of space for community facilities.

Planning Advice Note 63 states that “Developers should be encouraged to provide space in their proposed developments to accommodate;

- provision within the premises for facilities to separate and store different types of waste at source;
- kerbside collection (special care will need to be given to development in conservation areas); and
- centralised facilities for the public to deposit waste for recycling or recovery (“bring systems”).

Consideration should be given to the allocation of space that is required both inside and outside individual dwellings and properties for the storage of waste and recycling. This may include space to store a wheeled bin for household refuse, another for garden waste and sufficient space for recycling boxes which the householder may prefer to store inside the property. The use of home composting should also be considered, especially in this rural area. Developments with gardens may, in addition, consider the potential for using shared open areas for community composting schemes.

It should be ensured that adequate space is incorporated into the site layout to enable the collection of waste and recycling from the kerbside, as some of the vehicles are large and have restricted manoeuvrability.

In addition it should be ensured that adequate space is allocated for community facilities such as a Bring Bank for depositing of glass and manoeuvring of these banks. It is important this space is located sensitively as it may give rise to noise and therefore proximity to residential areas should be considered.

Describe what materials will be used in the building and the extent to which these are sustainable – e.g. renewable, responsibly recycled or reused; whether or not timber specified will be local and/or certified to come from a sustainably managed source

Sustainable materials do not deplete scarce resources, are processed avoiding the use of environmentally damaging techniques or chemicals, and do not require large inputs of energy in extraction, processing and transport. Developers should consider this but balance sourcing locally with bringing in specialised products such as energy efficient glazing or solar power systems that optimise the long term impact. SEPA seeks in relation to substantial new development that developers demonstrate that a) the development includes construction practices to minimise the use of raw materials and maximise the use of secondary aggregates and recycled or renewable materials; b) waste material generated by the proposal is reduced and re-used or recycled where appropriate on site (for example in landscaping not resulting in excessive earth moulding and mounding). There may be opportunities to utilise surplus soils for sustainable purposes elsewhere. The recovery and reuse of controlled waste should be in accordance with the Waste Management (Scotland) Licensing Regulations 1994

Show how the design has minimised the use of toxic or highly-processed materials and finishes, toxic timber treatment, composite materials and components that cannot be maintained.

The use of toxic materials should be avoided wherever possible and developers should look to select durable components that can be maintained or recycled. Further information on the materials that have these properties can be obtained from the Designing for Sustainability guidance.

Describe existing wildlife habitats and other features that support biodiversity (e.g. trees, hedges, watercourses etc).

There may be existing ecological interests on the site. There is coniferous woodland at Kirkton and two small watercourses with associated riparian woodland in expansion site R1. Given the scale of the development there is as an opportunity to improve biodiversity within the site and surrounding area.

Describe measures that will be taken to preserve wildlife, trees and plants on the site and enhance wildlife habitats.

Please refer to the Cultural & Natural Heritage section within the brief (page 21).

Show how the design of landscape features will enhance biodiversity at and around the site.

Please refer to the Cultural & Natural Heritage section within the brief (page 21).

Describe the surrounding road (or street) layout, parking, existing traffic measures and vehicular access to site and areas of vehicular / pedestrian conflict; existing pedestrian access to and through the site (where are people coming from / going to? What are the desire lines? Is there disabled access?).

The Kirkton complex is basically a series of cul-de-sacs the access road of which forms a tight curve to meet the A896 at right angles. There are currently 87 properties generally with off street parking which are served off Kirkton road and its subsidiaries. The present arrangement already provides contiguous footpaths. At the moment there are no parking restrictions on Kirkton Road and parking does affect visibility at bends. Due to the current problems created by on-street parking it is vital that additional housing does not exacerbate this problem.

Describe the new layout of vehicular access and parking; explain how pedestrians and cyclists will travel to and through the development.

Please refer to the Transport and Accessibility section of the brief (page 15).

Identify the distance from the site to the nearest public transport and explain how the development will be accessed by those without a car.

Private bus services run from Lochcarron Village Hall and from the post office which are roughly ½ km from AH2 and 1 km from R1; and a public train service runs from Strathcarron train station which lies 5km away. The contiguous footpaths through Kirkton connect through to croft road and thereafter to the rest of Lochcarron whose main services lie less than 1 km away.

Describe what facilities will be provided for cyclists.

The leisure centre will be an important public building within Lochcarron and will be in close proximity to the primary school. Therefore the applicant should consider the provision of cycle parking facilities.

Show what measures will be adopted to reduce and mitigate the impact of road traffic.

Please refer to the Transport and Accessibility section of the brief (page 15).

Historic precedence and Interpretation of the Design Guidance on built form

This appendix provides illustration of the guidance relating to building shape and form and examples of historic precedence which have informed the design and layout guidance.

Lochcarron Kirkton Design Framework - Historic Precedents



Contained Variety (above)
Within a consistent pattern of building form, the overall variety of design does not detract from the overall image of Lochcarron

Building patterns (left and below)
The Highland context is established by patterns of natural building growth, extensions and personalisation. new buildings should mirror this overall character.



BUILDING SHAPE AND FORM

A challenge of modern building design is to reflect the scale of the local architecture, while accommodating the larger building footprints common today. Large building can be accommodated where the overall mass is broken down into several components. Using traditional features such as lean-to's, porches and extended forms can connect the designs to local precedent and accommodate larger footprints.

The sketches below show a combination of single storey together with one and a half storey form. Note that the primary shape is white with a dark roof. Colour can be accommodated within discreet elements together with the use of timber cladding to emphasis the different elements of the building.

Larger extensions can be accommodated towards the rear of the buildings, a T-shaped plan is a traditional feature of highland architecture. Simple detailing is consistent with local character, overhanging eaves and verges should be avoided. Traditional building design avoids the use of large overhangs at eaves and verges.



PRECEDENTS

A traditional design is an acceptable approach, provided the overall guidance towards plan depth and roof pitch is followed, detailing should avoid excessive eaves and verge overhangs. Traditional slated roof and harling are preferred materials.



A contemporary design approach is also possible within the guidelines, using non traditional forms, and other materials, such as timber cladding and corrugated roofing, all these materials are consistent with the Highland character.



Sustainable design will often produce designs that cannot always follow rigid patterns good sustainable design should be encouraged, and where necessary the design guidance should be flexibly applied. Where an alternative approach is proposed an individual design statement should be submitted with the planning application.

